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Course Syllabi

Fall 9-1-2005

PHIL 200E.01: Ethics -The Great Traditions

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ETHICS: The Pursuit of Happiness

I. Intent of the Course

The intent of the course is to teach the standard versions of contemporary ethics and so to equip students with ethical literacy--the ability to recognize the origin and context of ethical arguments and the ability to convey one's ethical convictions clearly and circumspectly. The focus of the course is on the pursuit of happiness. Students will learn how the great traditions and contemporary social theory understand happiness.

II. Readings

We will read the texts in the following order and spend about three and a half weeks each on Kant, Mill, Aristotle, and Welch and the preceding Seligman selections.

Seligman, Authentic Happiness, chs. 1-4.

Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, sections 1 and 2.

Seligman, chs. 5-7.

Mill, Utilitarianism, all of it.

Seligman, chs. 8-10.

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, books 1-5 and 10.

Seligman, chs. 11-14.

Welch, Fools Crow, all of it.

III. Requirements

There will be weekly 20 minute tests, usually on Thursdays. Each test will consist of (a) three questions that will test your command of the course content and are to be answered with brief statements of about 30 words total for each question; (b) a question that asks you to identify the philosophical point that has been explained in class regarding a passage taken from the readings. It is to be answered in about 30 words; and (c) an essay question to be answered in 150 to 200 words. The three answers to the questions in part (a) will jointly receive a letter grade. The answer to (b) will be graded P (passing) or U (unsatisfactory). The answer to (c) will be graded P, U, or E (excellent). A P will raise the grade for (a) by one step (e.g. C- to C); U will lower it by one step (e.g. C- to D+); E will raise it by two steps (e.g. B to A-).

On the day of the final, Thursday, December 15 at 10:10 a.m., there will be a final test of twelve course content questions, nine drawn from previous tests, three on the material of the preceding week. The final test will have the weight of three ordinary tests. To pass the course, you have to pass the final.

You can miss one test (except the final test). If you take all the tests, the lowest grade (or one third of the final if that is your lowest grade) will be dropped. You can make up a missed test only (a) for medical reasons if you provide a statement from your physician or the Health Service, (b) if you are away on University business, (c) if there is a real hardship. Otherwise you will receive an F for a missed test.

IV. Note

We will use the stepped grading system for the course grade (A, A-, B+, . . . D-, F). The grades will be posted on Blackboard. Go to IT Central (SS 120) to find out how to log on to Blackboard.

September 19 is the last day to add and drop courses by Cyberbear.

October 10 is the last day to add and drop classes and change the grading option by paper form.

Office Hours:

Borgmann: MWF, 8:10-9:00 a.m. and by appointment. LA 149.

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Please let us know if you have a disability so that we can make accommodations.